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ABSTRACT

This practicum describes the development of an individualized approach to the remedial English program, including production of materials, implementation of an experimental section, and evaluation of the project. Two courses were combined: English for students needing intensive help and English for students with somewhat better skills. All students began working with transformational based materials to develop effective sentence structure and moved on to workbooks which presented principles for writing narrative-descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays. All students were urged to progress as quickly as possible, with 100 students expected to complete the program in one semester and 105 expected to take two semesters. Little group instruction took place. Pretest and posttest scores, grades, and student questionnaires indicated significant improvement in writing skills and a generally favorable attitude toward the program, with dissatisfaction in the grammar component. Recommendations include changes in the method of teaching grammar, development of additional or alternate language skills units, and more group activities to complement the individual work. (Author/JM)

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A PROGRAMMED APPROACH TO THE REMEDIATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

THE CURRICULUM MODULE

THE LEARNING THEORY MODULE

by

EDMUND H. BUCKLEY, M. A.

SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

—Edmund H. Buckley

This practicum describes the development of an individualized approach to the remedial English program, including production of materials, implementation of an experimental section, and evaluation of the project.

Two courses were combined: English 105, (meeting five days a week) for students needing intensive help; and English 100 (meeting three days a week), for students with somewhat better skills. All students began working with transformational grammar-based materials to develop effective sentence structure and moved on to workbooks which presented principles for writing narrative-descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays. 100 students were expected to complete the entire program in one semester; 105 students were expected to take two semesters. However, all students were urged to progress as quickly as possible.

Since students were working at different rates, little group instruction took place. Folders were kept which documented attendance and progress.

Pre- and post-test scores, grades, and student questionnaires indicated significant improvement in writing skills and a generally favorable attitude toward the program, with dissatisfaction in the grammar component. Recommendations include changes in the method of teaching the grammar, development of additional or alternate language skills units, and more group activities to complement the individual work.

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Also Appended: Portable Instructional Grammar, Books 1, 2, 3, and 4

Unit One: Reporting and
Unit Two: Exposition and Argumentation

INTRODUCTION

The English Department at Santa Rosa Junior College has been committed to remedial instruction for several years, and has devoted considerable time and effort to the development of worthwhile offerings to the increasing number of students who come to SRJC deficient in one or more language skills. However, while students have seemed to be learning more and remaining enrolled longer than in the days of the standard "bonehead English" classes, several instructors have been convinced that a better program can be developed. The need for more flexibility in curriculum as well as format suggests a programmed approach to communication skills.

Two courses have been at the heart of the remedial program: English 105 and English 100. Students with the greatest need for remediation have been required to take English 105, meeting five hours a week. Students with somewhat better skills have been required to take English 100, meeting three hours a week. English 105 students also had to complete English 100 to graduate. Both of these courses have been considered rather successful by students, faculty, and an evaluation team which looked at them for three days in the Spring of 1973. However, while instructors could and did move students from 105 or 100 to higher level courses throughout the semester as they demonstrated writing competence, the classroom format and classroom-designed materials hindered significant flexibility. Moreover, they are limited in scope, emphasizing transformational grammar and composi-

tion almost to the exclusion of reading, listening, or study skills.

There also existed a group of mini-courses offered by the English Department at COIL (Center of Independent Learning), the multi-disciplinary learning center on campus. These included units in spelling, reading, and composition. There were hopes that other units could be developed.

As originally conceived, the scope of this practicum included restructuring the 100 and 105 courses so they could be offered on an individualized basis for a pilot group, and integrating some or all of the COIL units. It was anticipated that students working through the composition assignments would complete them more quickly than before, allowing time for the COIL units. But meaningful integration of the COIL units and the 100-105 material did not occur for the following reasons: Restructuring the 100 and 105 courses was a bigger job than anticipated. It required the author, in effect, to write two workbooks and supervise the writing of four others. Students did not complete the composition material faster than before, even though it was individualized. As a consequence other units were not attempted by many students.

Thus, while the addition of other units to the remedial curriculum remains a goal of the English Department, this practicum concerns itself with the first phase of the project: the development of composition materials for the experimental 105-100 individualized program, its implementation, and its evaluation.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Remedial or "developmental" education has become a major responsibility of the community college, a consequence of the promise of the "open door." Roueche, Moore, Bossone, and others, however, have demonstrated that most remedial programs are only marginally successful.[1] Students in remedial programs are perceived as having significantly different problems and needs than those who do not, calling for approaches more comprehensive and carefully thought out than "watered down" versions of regular courses. Roueche and Kirk studied a number of programs they considered relatively successful and suggested a series of "components of success."

1. Instructors are honest, open, and totally committed to helping students be successful.
2. Instructional endeavors accommodate individual differences. Tutoring is often very effective. Learning activities are small and manageable, and measurable objectives are provided so the student and instructor are provided purposeful direction.
3. Some focus on the personhood development of each student is provided.

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[1] Roueche, John, Salvage, Redirection, or Custody--Remedial Education in the Community Junior College. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1968.

Moore, William Jr., Against the Odds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970.

Bossone, Richard M., "Remedial English Instruction in California Public Junior Colleges--An Analysis and Evaluation of Current Practice." Sacramento: California State Department of Education, September, 1966.

4. Program image is good.

5. Counseling is perceived as effective.

6. The remedial or developmental program is separated from the regular program.[2]

Of these, the first, third, and fourth and sixth characterize the Santa Rosa program. The English Department's commitment to helping students be successful is reflected in the absence for over a decade of the pecking order whereby the newest and youngest teachers are "saddled" with the remedial courses. Concern for remedial instruction resulted in the release time position of Remedial Coordinator in the Department, which the author presently holds. Personal development has been reflected in the curriculum of the remedial program, which emphasizes writing from personal experience, and in instruction, through which t.a's and teachers provide much informal counseling. And the Department's belief that the program is good was reinforced fairly recently in an independent evaluation.[3]

But the component most frequently stressed in discussions of remedial programs has been missing--the accommo-

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[2]Roueche, John E. and Kirk, R. Wade, Catching Up: Remedial Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973, pp. 60-79.

[3]Allen, Henry M., Casey, Rhoda Lintz, and Mangham, Clarence W. (Chairman), "An Evaluation of the Remedial English Program at Santa Rosa Junior College: A Summary Report." January, 1973. Available on request.

dation of individual differences, usually translated into some kind of individualization of program with discrete learning activities and measurable objectives. This practicum reports on the effort to develop this component.

It is appropriate here to describe the existing remedial program. It consists of two courses, 105 and 100. Students receiving a score of 0-14 on the English section of the ACT, 0-54 on the Diagnostic Reading Test, or 0-294 on the Verbal section of the SAT are placed in 105, which meets an hour each day and consists mainly of a heavy dose of transformational grammar as a strategy for generating complete and--hopefully--well embedded sentences and paragraphs. Students receiving a score of 15-19 on the English section of the ACT, 55-67 on the Diagnostic Reading Test, or 321-392 on the Verbal section of the SAT take 100, which meets three hours a week and is a course in the composition of narrative and descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays. It also begins with a unit of grammar. Instead of traditional grades, a student receives either NC (no credit), CR (credit with no recommendation to 1A) or CX (credit with recommendation to 1A). A CR in 100 satisfies the graduation requirement; neither 105 nor 100 is given transfer credit.

It appeared there would be several advantages for individualizing the units of the two courses. It was hoped that students could master the grammar unit faster in such a setting. With an individualized unit system, students who completed 105 could enter 100 without repeating the grammar unit,

as they had to before. Individualizing the units also opened up the opportunity of later creating additional units or alternate units to accommodate students with different learning approaches. The transformational grammar unit, for example, has been an excellent beginning place for most remedial students, but for others another method might be more appropriate.

Another hoped-for advantage was in the approach students and teachers took to compositions. It had been very difficult to get students to look very carefully at their problems in composition, particularly if at least some effort or other was rewarded with a "CR" and if the requirements for the compositions were not clear. It was hoped that individualizing composition units would allow the students to rewrite papers as needed, according to specific criteria, without getting "behind."

In essence, by individualizing the units, the Department hoped to combine 105 and 100 in a single skill oriented program (though the students with the lower test scores would still be required to come five days a week) through which the students would be encouraged to progress as quickly as they could. Other units might be developed, but first the existing material needed to be revised and a section combining 105 and 100 needed to be established on an experimental basis.

PROCEDURES

The procedure was divided naturally into three stages: production of the materials to be used, implementation of the experimental combined section of 105-100, and evaluation of the project.

I - Production of Materials

In the Spring and Summer of 1974 the author rewrote the composition materials formerly used in English 100, and a colleague, Patrick Pacheco, rewrote the grammar materials formerly used in English 105. A third colleague, Arnold Solkov, provided the readings and the exercises following the readings for the 100 booklets. In both cases, the rewriting was very substantial, although the earlier booklets were used as guidelines. Copies of Mr. Pacheco's work (Portable Instructional Grammar, Books 1-4) and the author's (Unit One: Reporting, and Unit Two: Exposition and Argumentation) are appended to this Practicum report.

The underlying rationale of the grammar booklets is the notion of pattern recognition. Upon this is built the notion of a test frame; from there students proceed to sentence patterns and the manipulation of sentence patterns to produce modification groups and, ultimately, expanded sentences. An attempt is made to relate syntax to meaning, so that the students see that the organization of a sentence directly reflects the organization of ideas. This becomes a metaphor for the organization of paragraphs, essays, books,

and pictures.

The grammar booklets follow a modified branching program format. There are a series of units, in each of which are stated, at the beginning, a lesson context and lesson goals, so that the students learn why they are doing the unit. The principles are divided into one or two sentence explanations, usually followed immediately by a question or small exercise which in turn is followed by some sort of review statement. Tests are taken at key points, and alternate exercises are prescribed if the tests are not passed.

The underlying rationale for the composition booklets is the use of familiar sensory experiences and media as metaphors of writing principles. Thus sensory awareness is related to the need for specific detail in writing; the still camera and motion picture camera are related to organizational strategies; and the human voice is related to tone and one's point of view. The format of the composition booklets consists of a series of modules, in each of which there is an introductory statement explaining its purpose, an overview of the activities and assignments, a series of activities, a reading assignment, and a writing assignment. This latter is broken down into several pre-writing exercises, which form the notes for the composition to be written and a proofreading checklist. Also included are opportunities for student evaluation of the material and of his or her own work.

The composition booklets form a kind of linear program. The "test" in each module is the composition, and students who do not complete the composition must rewrite it. Since considerable instructor-student dialogue should take place about the compositions, the 100 booklets are not intended to be used independently.

II. Implementation of the Program

In September when students entered Room 16 at 10:00 a.m. they met two teachers and two teaching assistants (students from California State College, Sonoma) and told they were in a combined, experimental 105-100 class. In the first week they were all given a pre-test written by the author.[4] This was used to refer students believed to be qualified to take 1A in spite of their original placement score, and also as a pre-test for students remaining in the class.

The two teachers, the author and Mr. Solkov, stressed the need for faithful attendance--five days a week for 105 students, three for 100 students. They also urged students to work through the material as quickly as possible, working at home whenever they could. (All the students began with the grammar materials.) A large chart in the room indicated which week it was and where in the program the students should attempt to be, although it was readily acknowledged

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[4]Appendix, page 34- English 100/105 Composition Test.

that the chart was only a guess. Student folders were kept in a file cabinet and students were required to take them out each day, to be initialed by an instructor or teaching assistant. A form attached to the folder had spaces for the instructors or teaching assistants to note attendance and progress, so that students and staff were continually aware of the student's record.[5]

Almost every Friday the instructors sat down together and reviewed every folder, making a note to the student about his progress that week. Soon the students checked their folders automatically to see their "report cards," This was an interesting comment on belief in forms, since the instructors wrote nothing on the form they had not told each student two or three times during the preceding week.

Occasionally one or the other instructor would speak to the class as a whole, particularly in the beginning, since there were a number of unimportant but confusing errors in the first grammar booklets. Most of the time, however, the students worked on their own.

After a few weeks, groups of students began working together, although not necessarily on the same units. In one case this was not beneficial--the dominant person in the group wanted to gossip most of the time and the others followed suit--but in most cases the grouped students helped each other and enjoyed a sense of belonging otherwise lack-

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[5]Appendix, page 35 - Student Attendance and Progress Record.

ing in the individualized setting.

Tests for the grammar materials were kept by the teachers and distributed to the students when they needed them. Tests were corrected as soon as the students completed them, and students were immediately directed either to move on to the next unit or to review. Usually an instructor or teaching assistant would review the work with the student at this point, emphasizing the concepts learned or relating them to composition.

As the students began writing essays, examples of their writing were reproduced and distributed to the entire class. There was little class discussion of these essays, although usually one of the instructors would include some comments with the reproduced essay.[6] The general practice was for both instructors to read the completed essay and then mutually grade it "Pass" or "Revise" for each of the categories listed under "Proofreading Checklist" for that module. As the essay was returned to the student one of the instructors explained the corrections in more detail. This practice became abbreviated as the semester progressed for two reasons: first, the number of papers increased dramatically and cut down on instructor time. Second, after the first one or two essays, most students understood the criticism more clearly and needed less explanation. Similarly, less rewriting was necessary for the essays in the later

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[6]Appendix, page 40 - Student Essay Reproduced for Class.

modules than for those of the early modules.

This description, written by a counselor who was asked to observe the section, accurately reflects the activity in the classroom on a typical day:

> "When entering the large room I was amazed at all the body movement. Everyone was actively doing something. I liked the way a student could come in late, go to a file, pull out his work, sit down and start working.
>
> "I asked a girl what she was doing and she proceeded to explain material with which I am not familiar. She told me it was 'easy' once I got the basics. Then the fellow next to her started telling me about course requirements and how everyone could go at his own pace.
>
> "I noticed a group in the corner which seemed to be a social group. It did not seem like they were interested in English, but were involved in discussing whatever they were discussing.
>
> "I saw a great demand for instructor time. A hand would go up and someone would be there within minutes to answer whatever the question. I listened to Ed give encouragement to a student who was not quite sure of his work. He had it grammatically correct but was concerned about its interest level.
>
> "I see this class as being student-oriented. I am not aware of the course content and inquired how English 100 and 105 could be run concurrently. I like that a student starting in English 105 can complete English 100 if he completes the required work."

At the beginning of the semester the 105 students were informed that they were expected to finish all four of the grammar booklets plus another unit of spelling or reading,[7] in order to receive three units of 105 credit. The 100 students were expected to finish the first three of the four

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[7] Wilson, S. R., First Principles of Composition, Volume 1, Spelling (Validation Edition). San Rafael: Individual Learning Systems, Inc., 1974.
Pauk, Walter, Six-Way Paragraphs. Providence: Jamestown Publishers, 1974.

grammar booklets plus both of the two composition booklets to receive three units of 100 credit. These projections underestimated the time the students took on the grammar unit. Instead of finishing the grammar around the fourth or fifth week, most 100 students were still working on it by the seventh, eighth and even tenth weeks, and 105 students were also taking more time than anticipated. Consequently the policy was revised: 105 students did not have to complete the final grammar booklet to receive credit, nor did 100 students have to finish the final composition booklet. However, the final composition booklet was required for the recommendation to 1A. It was also made clear to the students that if they did not meet the requirements they would not have to repeat the entire class. Rather, they would receive the credit as soon as they completed the missing material. 105 students who finished early were urged to begin working with the composition materials, so that they could, if they wished, finish 100 early in the spring semester.

III. Evaluation of the Program

Evaluation took place in two areas: student attitudes toward the program and student performance as a result of the program.

A. Evaluation of Student Attitudes

Evaluation of student attitudes was based on responses to the module evaluations in the composition booklets (in

the case of students who progressed to them), responses to a questionnaire circulated at the conclusion of the semester, attrition rate and final grades compared to that of similar classes in past semesters, and personal observation. These will be taken in turn.

In each module of the first composition book (Unit One: Reporting) a tear-out page entitled "Feedback" was provided.[8] This attempted to ascertain if the student felt he understood the concepts of the module and if he enjoyed the activities assigned. The student was to complete this section prior to the reading assignment and composition assignment of the module. A second tear-out sheet entitled "Module Evaluation" attempted to ascertain the student's reaction to the entire module.[9] In the first section of this questionnaire a "yes" or "no" response is requested, and the student is asked if the purposes of the modules are clear and if he believes he learned what was taught. The second part asks for a letter grade of each section of the module, and of the module as a whole. A simple tallying of the responses to these questionnaires was made. Means were established for the graded responses.

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[8]See pp. 11, 41, 70, and 99 in Unit One: Reporting, appended to this report.

[9]See pp. 26, 58, 87, and 112 in Unit One: Reporting, and pp. 41 and 64 in Unit Two: Exposition and Argumentation, appended to this report.

The final questionnaire[10] circulated at the conclusion of the course attempted to ascertain if the students found it difficult, enjoyable, worthwhile, and useful. Students were asked what they would add to or eliminate from the course, and what grade they would give it. A space for additional comments was provided. As with the other questionnaires, a simple tallying of the responses was made and means established for the graded response.

Attrition rate and final grades in the experimental section were compared to that for 105 and 100 classes for the entire English Department in the springs of 1972, 1973, and 1974. (Fall semester data has not been kept.) 1972 was the first year the Department switched from ABCDF to CX-CR-NC grading.

B. Evaluation of Student Performance

Evaluation of student performance was based on attrition rate, final grades, examination of pre- and post-tests (for students who completed at least the first composition booklet), and examination of changes in student writing as evidenced in succeeding assignments. These will be taken in turn.

Treatment of attrition and final grades has already been discussed.

The pre- and post-tests[11] attempted to combine quanti-

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[10] See page 18 of this report.

[11] Appendix, page 34 - English 100/105 Composition Test.

tative and qualitative assessment of composition skills. The first ten items tested for recognition of sentence fragments, run-ons, and correct sentences. The second ten items tested for sentence-combining ability; students were asked to combine two simple sentences into one complex one. The number right of these twenty was totaled. The rest of the test consisted of three one-page writing samples. The first was a narrative-descriptive paper; the second, expository; the third, argumentative. Except for the topic for the last paper, the pre- and post-tests were identical.

The number right for the first twenty items in the pre-test was compared with the number right in the post-test, and statistical significance was established by use of the T-Test. Evaluation of the essays was more subjective. Rather than grade the pre-test essays and post-test essays separately, the instructors compared them, marking each pair as evidencing "no improvement," "some improvement," or "considerable improvement." The amount of improvement evidenced by the tests was compared to the instructors' observations about each student's improvement as evidenced by the compositions handed in throughout the semester.

Of course, most of the 105 students did not complete the entire program, nor were they expected to. However, a writing sample was obtained from them at the end of the semester and was compared to the writing they did on the pre-test. Again, the degree of improvement was noted.

C. Limitations in the Evaluation Procedure

1. The pre- and post-tests assessment may be flawed because the writing circumstances were much different than those of the class. Throughout the semester students had been given very explicit instructions about their assignments and could do their writing at home. The pre- and post-tests were conducted in class, with limited time, and without the same kind of explicit directions for organization.

2. Student responses to the materials and the program are probably heavily influenced by the students' reactions to the instructors and teaching assistants, who were enthusiastic about the program and the responses may not be representative of the class as a whole.

3. A comparison of student attrition is somewhat misleading since some students received a grade of NC (no credit) who are missing just a few assignments and will probably make them up and receive credit shortly. Similarly, several students who received CR (credit) will be recommended to 1A within a few weeks after the beginning of the semester.

4. Several other variables make this evaluation very tentative. Since this was the first semester the program was in effect, a lot of logistical problems occurred--errors in the material, difficulty getting booklets printed on time, etc. Also, most of the 105 students have not yet completed the program, which for them has been envisioned

as a two semester process.

RESULTS

I. Final Questionnaire

Results of the final questionnaire are summarized on the next three pages. The 105 responses are summarized first, followed by the 100 responses and then the two groups combined. Comments of students were abbreviated by the author, but every comment made was included. The grades in response to question 8 were totaled and averaged to get the "G.P.A."

The results suggest the following: 105 students tended to think the course was somewhat difficult while 100 students tended not to think it so. Neither group rated the course particularly enjoyable, though 100 students rated it higher. But both groups tended to think what they learned would be useful. Again, the 100 students rated it higher. 105 students gave the course a grade slightly above a flat "C"; 100 students gave it a flat "B", making the total G.P.A. a very weak "B-".

A look at the comments reveals 105 students felt pressured by time and burdened by the grammar, and wished the instructors could have provided more assistance. 100 students felt pressured by the amount of material to be covered and did not like the required reading. Many seemed to want more discussion and other "non-individualized" activities. But suggestions for what to add varied considerably. 100 students were more positive in general about the program

RESPONSES OF 105 STUDENTS

105-100 QUESTIONNAIRE

The English Department would like your help in improving the 105-100 program. Please answer the questions below, adding comments or suggestions if you wish. You need not sign your name.

CIRCLE THE BEST RESPONSE.

1. What course are you taking? ~~100~~ 105

2. Compared to your other courses, how difficult was this course?

   Less difficult —3 About like the others —8 More difficult —7

3. Compared to your other courses, how enjoyable was this course?

   Not as enjoyable —7 About like the others —9 More enjoyable —2

4. How much do you think you learned?

   A lot —7 Not very much —2 Hard to say —9

5. How useful do you think what you learned in this course will be in other courses you take?

   Very useful—2 Somewhat Useful—11 Occasionally useful—4 Not useful—2

6. What materials or activities, if any, would you ELIMINATE from this course:

   writing from pictures/4th grammar book/everything/some grammar/time limits/too many in class, not enough help/some grammar/time limits

7. What materials or activities, if any, would you ADD to this course?

   more discussion/more examples/dictionaries/spelling/entire system/essays on our own/ more help with grammar/ more help

8. After reviewing your answers to the seven questions above, what grade (A, B, C, D, or F) would you give this course? Mean G.P.A.: 2.20 or "C"

   6 B's
   6 C's
   3 D's

   Additional comments:

   More group study/too many errors in books, hard to understand/well put together, learned a lot/ good to come daily/too much grammar at beginning/boring—instructors should have taught it as a class/ hard to understand, confusing/ somewhat helpful/ hard/ helpful

RESPONSES OF 100 STUDENTS

105-100 QUESTIONNAIRE

The English Department would like your help in improving the 105-100 program. Please answer the questions below, adding comments or suggestions if you wish. You need not sign your name.

CIRCLE THE BEST RESPONSE.

1. What course are you taking? 100 ~~105~~

2. Compared to your other courses, how difficult was this course?

   Less difficult —9 About like the others —12 More difficult —3

3. Compared to your other courses, how enjoyable was this course?

   Not as enjoyable —7 About like the others —10 More enjoyable —7

4. How much do you think you learned?

   A lot —15 Not very much —2 Hard to say —7

5. How useful do you think what you learned in this course will be in other courses you take?

   Very useful —13 Somewhat Useful—10 Occasionally useful—1 Not useful—0

6. What materials or activities, if any, would you ELIMINATE from this course:

attendance should not affect grade/too much demanded/last booklet/ boring reading/ some grammar/too much demanded/ difficult reading/ some reading and writing/ re-writing/ half of the readings/ readings in 1st composition booklet

7. What materials or activities, if any, would you ADD to this course?

more discussion/more writing about feelings/more argumentation/ student writing/ more essays/more discussion of voice in argumentation/ more readings/grammar/group work

8. After reviewing your answers to the seven questions above, what grade (A, B, C, D, or F) would you give this course?

Mean G.P.A.: 3.00 or "B"
5 A's
14 B's
5 C's

Additional comments:

Teachers didn't understand my writing/helpful and enjoyable/ pre-writing useful/ more help--too much waiting/good but didn't like self-pacing/good but not enough time/ needed more teacher help/ waste of time/ satisfying and enjoyable/ well-planned but class too big/ grammar should go faster/ too much work/ push beginning more/ more on beginning books/ good but too quiet/more longer essays, less short ones/too large/ good job--I just don't like English

TOTAL RESPONSES—ALL STUDENTS

105-100 QUESTIONNAIRE

The English Department would like your help in improving the 105-100 program. Please answer the questions below, adding comments or suggestions if you wish. You need not sign your name.

CIRCLE THE BEST RESPONSE.

1. What course are you taking? 100 105

2. Compared to your other courses, how difficult was this course?

   Less difficult —12 About like the others —20 More difficult —10

3. Compared to your other courses, how enjoyable was this course?

   Not as enjoyable —14 About like the others —19 More enjoyable —9

4. How much do you think you learned?

   A lot —22 Not very much —4 Hard to say —6

5. How useful do you think what you learned in this course will be in other courses you take?

   Very useful—15 Somewhat Useful—21 Occasionally useful—5 Not useful—2

6. What materials or activities, if any, would you ELIMINATE from this course:

   _____

   _____

7. What materials or activities, if any, would you ADD to this course?

   _____

   _____

8. After reviewing your answers to the seven questions above, what grade (A, B, C, D, or F) would you give this course?

   Mean G.P.A.: 2.59 or "B-"

   5 A's 3 D's
   20 B's
   11 C's

   Additional comments:

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

than the 105 students.

II. Questionnaires in the Composition Booklets

Responses to the composition booklet questionnaires were not, of course, made by the majority of 105 students who will be using those books in the spring. (Summaries of all the responses are in the copies of the booklets appended to this report. See pp. 11, 26, 41, 58, 71, 87, 99, and 112 in Reporting and pp. 41 and 64 in Exposition and Argumentation.) But the students who did turn in responses indicated general satisfaction with each module, giving each a "B" and consistently claiming an understanding of the principles in each. In general the lowest grade given was to the reading selections and exercises. This corresponds to the responses and comments in the final questionnaire.

III. Attrition and Final Grades

The Instructional Office maintains information about grade distribution and provided the number of CX's or CR's, NC's, and drops noted for the spring semesters of 1972, 1973, and 1974. CX's and CR's are totaled together. A comparison of those data and data for the experimental class follows:

	CR/CX		NC		Drops/Leaves		Total
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%	
Spring 1972	717	62.5	123	10.7	307	26.7	1,147
Spring 1973	614	62.1	133	13.4	242	24.4	989
Spring 1974	341	53.2	109	17.0	191	29.8	641
Experimental	34	58.6	14	24.1	10	17.3	58

The data suggest that the number of persons receiving some sort of credit is within the range of the department grading policies; no significant differences are noted. More students received "NC" and fewer dropped than the department mean, however. Since "NC" is given to students who remain throughout the semester, while drops of course are given to those who leave earlier, this may indicate, however tentatively, that students remained in the experimental course longer, even if they did not receive credit. This is consistent with the policy established for the first time in the experimental course: that students should remain working even if they knew they could not complete the minimum requirements, because they could begin where they left off in the next semester. A look at the roll sheets indicate at least seven students who fully intend to do that. Assuming they will actually complete the work, the number of students who for all practical purposes receive credit in the program rises to 41, or 69.1%. This is so speculative, however, and these students will have to be monitored closely.

IV. Analysis of the Pre- and Post-Test Scores

Scores on the first twenty items of the pre- and post-tests for those who completed the program are listed--

Subject Number	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
1	16	15	- 1
2	15	20	5
3	12	17	5
4	14	19	5
5	18	18	0
6	18	19	1
7	16	16	0
8	17	19	2
9	12	18	6
10	16	19	3
11	16	17	1
12	12	17	5
13	13	16	3
14	15	16	1
15	15	15	0
16	13	17	4
17	15	19	4
18	17	19	2
19	17	17	0
20	18	18	0
21	17	14	- 3
22	11	19	8
23	14	18	4
	$\bar{X}_1 = 15.09$	$\bar{X}_2 = 17.48$	$\bar{X}_D = 2.66$

The t-test was used to produce the following statistics:

$t = 4.19$; $df = 22$; $p < .01$

Thus it can be inferred that the mean increase in test scores is not attributable to sampling variation. Since the test was not discussed or examined with students between test-taking, and since the instruction related directly to the

items tested, it is assumed test scores reflect learning of sentence structure and sentence-combining.

In the combined judgment of the two instructors, the students performed as follows on the narrative/descriptive, expository, and argumentative writing samples:

	Nar/Desc.		Expos.		Argu.	
No improvement noted	3		8		6	
Some improvement noted	8	86.4%	8	63.6%	8	72.6%
Considerable improvement noted	11		6		8	

Since the requirements for completion of the course changed, so that students did not have to finish the final composition book (dealing with exposition and argumentation) the higher evaluations for narrative descriptive writing are logical. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of the students were adjudged to have improved in all three areas. This suggests transference of writing skills from one sort of writing task to another.

The narrative/descriptive section of the pre-test was compared with an end-of-semester writing sample for those students (mostly 105 students) who did not complete the entire program. Improvement was noted as follows:

No improvement	3	
Some improvement	6	80%
Considerable improvement	6	

V. Other Comments

Certain students made rather significant gains in their writing ability not adequately reflected in the evaluative processes already described. While not typical of the whole class, there were enough of these students--more than in previous semesters, in the opinion of the instructors--to suggest something positive about the program. For example, a student who scored 11 on the first part of the pre-test and 19 on the post-test wrote the following at the beginning of the semester:

> This picture is a picture of an older man. He is dressed very neatly in his madras shirt. I would say he is about 85 years old, and as though his years have told the story he looks tired. I assume he is not able to see too well as he is wearing glasses. The background of this picture is black, which gives it a dark and boring look. This picture reminds me of someone's grandfather. He looks as though he is a gardener and also a grandchildren bouncer in his spare time. I like this picture as I'm sure you do, too.

Technically the description is passable; that is, there are few mechanical errors. But it is poorly organized: the writer wanders aimlessly about the picture, from the man to the background and then back to the man; and the point of view is inconsistent since she says she likes the picture at one point but says it is "dark and boring" at another.

Later she wrote this paragraph, excerpted from one of her essays:

The dining area, that is adjoined to the cooking area, when measured is 6' x 9' long. One wall has a picture, a very old-fashioned looking picture, with wooden spoons and a bowl. Another wall, where the telephone hangs, has pictures also. Pictures of people and soft places with gentle colors surround the telephone. Looking at these pleasant seemingly life-like photographs, I feel a gentle stillness coming over me. Then I see it. The clump of junk sitting in one big heap in the middle of the kitchen table. The table, a chestnut brown, elliptical in shape, generally is cluttered with papers and various other objects. My nice yellow and green shiny striped gords are peeking out from underneath my little girl's math. papers. My letter, from my mother, that was so neatly placed in the center of the table, is now hanging over the edge of the table. My husband's lunch box, the large ugly black thing, is on there, accompanying my stack of notebooks, that are strewn about. A box of crayons rests upon a half-colored picture of porky pig.

There are some technical problems and awkwardness in this paragraph (her mother appears to be neatly placed in the center of the table!), but that is because she is experimenting with language, particularly the embedded, densely structured sentence. Now the paragraph has shape: the writer moves logically from the opening sentence announcing that the description is to be of the dining area, over to the walls and pictures and then to the table and the junk on the table. It also has a consistent point of view and tone; she communicates the feelings of softness and gentleness of her decorations and how they clash with the stuff of her life, full of dissonance and activity, on the table. There is humor and an effective contrast developed. The writer has learned what it means to be in control of her own writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Because of improvements noted in composition skills and the flexibility the individualized approach provides, and providing that the problems both students and staff noted can be solved by the recommendations below, it is recommended that the program as generally structured be continued.

2. The goal that students would complete the grammar unit more quickly in the individualized setting was not met. Both levels of remedial students took too much time working on it, considering the tedium produced and the benefits derived. The class should be restructured or the materials re-written so that the majority of 105 students spend no more than eight weeks working exclusively on grammar and the majority of 100 students spend no more than five weeks. Various options should be explored, including allowing some students to omit the grammar entirely, having students working with the grammar concommitantly rather than prior to the composition or other units, or instructing the class together in it so that individualization would take place after the grammar unit is completed.

3. The final questionnaire responses indicate more group work is desirable to give students a sense of belonging in a supportive and friendly environment. At least two approaches should be attempted: occasional all-class dis-

cussions of writing principles common to most of the units and of problems the students might be having in or out of class; and small group discussions of readings, particularly those written by classmates.

4. Student responses indicate dissatisfaction with the readings and reading activities in the composition booklets. They should be eliminated and replaced by examples of the assigned compositions taken from previous classes. Reading instruction per se should be handled in another unit and not integrated in the composition booklets.

5. What constitutes CR or CX must be established on a clear and equitable basis. If there is too much material, cutting should first take place in the grammar, as per the first recommendation. At the same time care should be taken to make these requirements consistent and objective so that mere attendance and "guesstimate" ("he really tried hard") do not become all that is necessary, as was too often the case in the past.

6. Because this study was involved with a small sample in the first hectic semester of operation, research should be continued. Almost every instructor adopted the booklets appended to this report after reviewing them in the summer, and have since been enthusiastic about them, although they were not consistently used in an individualized setting, and no other 105 or 100 classes were combined.

Data are being collected on those classes as well and should continue to be collected in succeeding semesters. A record of pre- and post-test information should be maintained, and a persistence study initiated.

7. Files of students who have not completed the program should be forwarded to other remedial teachers to insure that students do not have to repeat units of work they have already finished.

8. As the units become more refined and the Department becomes more committed to individualization of the remedial offerings (as anticipated), other units should be developed as alternatives or supplements to the current ones. They might include instruction in reading, listening, study skills, punctuation, or verbal communication.

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APPENDIX

ENGLISH 100/105 COMPOSITION TEST

TO THE STUDENT: This test is designed to show how well you can write sentences and paragraphs. A similar test will be given at the end of the semester, and you will have an opportunity to see how much you have improved.

I. IDENTIFYING CORRECT AND INCORRECT SENTENCE STRUCTURE

DIRECTIONS: The items below are fragments, run-ons, or complete sentences. Study the examples carefully, and then mark each item

F if it is a fragment,

R if it is a run-on,

C if it is complete.

Examples:

Fragment — an incomplete sentence: "Being afraid of the dark."
Run-On — two sentences improperly joined: "The boy became ill, he went home."
Complete Sentence — "I stood at the podium and scanned the audience."

____ 1. When I got to the Empire State Building, I told the taxi-driver to wait.

____ 2. Ellen, wanting to say goodbye to her mother.

____ 3. The students may rock their societies, but without the support of adult social forces, they cannot overturn the established order.

____ 4. It was not difficult for the Bishop to waken early, after midnight his body became more and more chilled and cramped.

____ 5. The chowder was made of small juicy clams, scarcely bigger than hazel nuts, mixed with pounded ship biscuit and salted pork cut up into little flakes.

____ 6. I stood at the podium and scanned the audience, not one face looked relaxed and friendly.

____ 7. In the East, where people think of California as a strange and distant place inhabited by desperate and dangerous men.

____ 8. The old man waiting in the dreary bus depot.

____ 9. There are not as many Mormon trees as there used to be, it seems a pity.

____ 10. Because Nixon has clung stubbornly to the Presidency for so long.

II - Combining Sentences

DIRECTIONS: Below are several pairs of short sentences. Combine each pair into a single sentence by altering one or both of the original sentences. For this exercise, DO NOT JOIN THE SENTENCES BY ADDING "and" or "but."

Example: Joe was skiing down the hill. Joe hit a tree.
You write: Skiing down the hill, Joe hit a tree.

11. His whole body was shaking uncontrollably. Peterson crouched in the icy water.

12. I had breakfast with my aunt. She lives in a treehouse just outside of Cleveland.

13. The young man looked up suspiciously. He was wearing dark trousers, black dress shoes, and a new-laundered white shirt.

14. She left the house. She got into the car.

15. He had come to work four hours late every day for a week. They decided he should seek employment elsewhere.

16. The kite soared over the bay. Its ragged tail was flapping gaily.

17. You must meet Mr. Ford. He is the man who used to be a Congressman.

18. It is in the middle of the morning. The hawk scans the fields for food.

19. There is the woman. Her speeches have inspired thousands.

20. The Republicans may have an easier time of it. Nixon resigned.

III - REPORTING (Descriptive Writing)

DIRECTIONS: Look at the picture your instructor has provided. Assume you have to describe it to someone who cannot see it. Write a Descriptive paragraph and try to include as much detail as you can. Organize your paragraph so that the relationship between parts of the picture is clear. You may wish to finish your description with a statement about how the picture affects you.

IV - EXPOSITION

DIRECTIONS: In Exposition or expository writing you try to explain something as clearly as possible. How well can you explain something you know well? Try to do so in the space below. You may use additional paper if you wish. Be sure to state your topic in the space provided. If you are "stuck" for a topic, consider one of these:

- Why you have decided to go to college -
- Why you might like a career in _____ -

_____
(Your topic)

V - ARGUMENTATION

DIRECTIONS: In Argumentation or argumentative writing you try to state a strong position on an issue or problem as effectively as possible. How well can you present a position you feel strongly? Try to do so with reference to the topic below. You may use additional paper if you wish.

"American women are (or are not) an oppressed group whose cries for liberation need to be heeded."

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PROGRESS RECORD Name _____

PH._____ 105 100

ATTENDANCE

WK.	M	TU	W	TH	FR.	Wk.	M	TU	W	TH	FR
1						9					
2						10					
3						11					
4						12					
5						13					
6						14					
7						15					
8						16					

PROGRESS

Pre-Test _____ REPORTING 1 _____

Post-Test _____ 2 _____

PIG 1 & 2 _____ 3 _____

PIG 3 _____

PIG 4 _____ EXPOSITION _____

Other _____ ARGUMENTATION _____

OTHER COMMENTS: _____

STUDENT ESSAY REPRODUCED FOR CLASS

Metaphor of the Camera

Staring blankly as if reaching to see every bit of the surroundings, I notice the mystic black clouds from my window. The clouds seem like giant hands reaching out capturing the surviving area of blue sky. As they tumble over the dark green hills the houses there seem helpless as if being conquered by an unknown invasion. Swiftly now they billow into the unhappy valley below.

In the valley is a rich green golf course which seems lonely and desolate without its players. All day the golfers feast on the area with their clubs in one hand and their silly expressions clinging to their faces. The course is motionless now with the players safely tucked in their homes. On the hills surrounding the course lie pinpointed houses with their magnificent architecture and views.

In the back of my house which overlooks the valley are numerous trees that vary from oak to bayleaf. The trees seem to accept the oncoming cold night with their thick barks protecting their bodies. One tree slides over onto our porch as if seeking shelter for the night.

On our porch is a large rich green bush of poison oak seeking a way to victimize the people inside. Our porch is moldy with bits of brown and grey debre clinging to the wood. Leaves use the porch for their landing and seem to enjoy the ownership of the porch.

Looking closely at my window I see my spotted glass, needing desperately to be cleaned, all the while I ignore the windows cry for help. On my window sill I see an abandoned graveyard of spiders homes, a few ashes, and a thin film of dust. My bottles on the sill consists of a few liquor bottles an old teapot and a statue of a little man with a sign on him that says, "I love you this much." I remember now my ninth grade boyfriend shyly handing it over to me on Valentines day.

Lying on my bed I watch the sky swallow the valley below as lights head the dark hillside. Rain will come tonight, as I think how lucky I am to be safely inside, watching away from the darkened world outside.

* * * * * * * * * * *

ERRORS: a few spelling errors (can you find them?), one run-on sentence (2 NVX's written as one), and apostrophes missing (Valentine's day).

This paper is EXCELLENT. The shifts in focus are organized and clear and natural. The reader's eye follows easily the shifts from clouds, to valley, to house, to porch, to window, to the details in the room, and then back outside again as it grows dark. Note the focus becomes closer in a natural way, moving out again in the last paragraph. The details are not only specific, they contribute together to a unified mood of melancholy. Note the V's (tumble, billow, feast, tree sliding over) the A_2's (desolate,) the comparisons. The oncoming night and the memory of the shy ninth grade boyfriend anchor the description in time, bring us closer to it so we believe it happened.